

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ANKARA 07902 271408Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08
FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 SP-02 STR-05 TRSE-00 LAB-04
SIL-01 OMB-01 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 L-03 NSC-05
PA-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-06 OES-07 EURE-00 /094 W
-----050853 271432Z /47

P R 271222Z OCT 77
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9294
INFO AMCONSUL ADANA POUCH
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL IZMIR
AMEMBASSY PARIS

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USOECD

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: ECON, SWEL, TU
SUBJECT: GOR PERMITS PILGRIMAGE DESPITE POTENTIAL HEALTH AND
FINANCIAL COSTS

1. GOT HAS DECIDED NOT TO BAN PILGRIMAGE OF TURKS TO
MECCA THIS YEAR, DESPITE PRESENCE OF CHOLERA IN MIDDLE
EAST AND SHORTAGE OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE AVAILABLE FOR
TRAVEL ALLOTMENTS. ON OCTOBER 25, CENTRAL BANK
DISTRIBUTED \$26 MILLION IN FOREIGN EXCHANGE TO LOCAL
BANKS FOR PILGRIMAGE TRAVEL ALLOWANCES. AT \$600 A PERSON, THIS
AMOUNT WILL ALLOW ONLY 43,000 TURKS TO GO TO MECCA, COMPARED TO
100,000 IN 1976.

2. A BAN WAS RECOMMENDED BY GOT HEALTH EXPERTS AND A
JUSTICE PARTY DEPUTY. ON BASIS OF TECHNICAL STUDIES,
SUPREME HEALTH COUNCIL OF GOT HEALTH MINISTRY RECOMMENDED
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IN EARLY OCTOBER THAT GOT BAN GROUP TRAVEL AND MINIMIZE
INDIVIDUAL TRAVEL IN ANY COUNTRY SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECTED
BY CHOLERA. THIS WOULD HAVE PREVENTED TURKS FROM
MAKING PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA BY SACRIFICE HOLIDAY, WHICH
IS NOVEMBER 22 THIS YEAR. AT MEETING OF JUSTICE PARTY'S
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY GROUP ON OCTOBER 12, BITLIS DEPUTY
ABIDIN INAN-GAYDALI (BROTHER OF ENERGY MINISTER KAMRAN

INAN) REPORTEDLY URGED THAT PILGRIMAGE BE BANNED FOR BOTH HEALTH AND FINANCIAL REASONS. HE EMPHASIZED THAT LAST YEAR'S PILGRIMAGE COST TURKEY \$60 MILLION IN FOREIGN EXCHANGE.

3. SPEAKING AGAINST THE BAN IN A TELEVISED PRESS CONFERENCE ON OCTOBER 25, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER NECMETTIN ERBAKAN DENIED THERE WAS A CHOLERA EPIDEMIC IN MIDDLE EAST OR A SHORTAGE OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE IN TURKEY. HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT FINANCE MINISTER WOULD SATISFY DEMAND FOR FOREIGN CURRENCY, INSISTING THAT CONSTITUTION GUARANTEES RIGHT OF PILGRIMAGE.

4. DEMIREL, FACING POLITICAL REALITIES, HAS BEEN UNWILLING TO BLOCK PILGRIMAGE, DESPITE POTENTIAL HEALTH HAZARDS THAT IT MAY CAUSE AND CERTAIN OUTFLOW OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE WHICH TURKEY CANNOT AFFORD. DEMIREL'S INABILITY TO BAN PILGRIMAGE IS EASILY EXPLAINED BY SACRED NATURE OF THE HAJ, DEPENDENCE OF DEMIREL ON COOPERATION OF COALITION PARTNERS IN OTHER AREAS, AND HIS DESIRE TO AVOID EROSION OF SUPPORT FOR JUSTICE PARTY THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

5. ACCORDING TO YAVUZ CANEVI, DIRECTOR GENERAL, FOREIGN EXCHANGE, CENTRAL BANK, BANK HOPES THAT PILGRIMS WILL REQUIRE NO MORE THAN \$26 MILLION IN FOREIGN EXCHANGE TRAVEL ALLOWANCES. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BANK IS COUNTING ON POSSIBILITY THAT NUMBER OF PILGRIMS THIS YEAR WILL BE LESS THAN LAST DUE TO CHOLERA SCARE. SPIERS

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Message Attributes

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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 27-Oct-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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